

BACKGROUND

The Mission Valley planning area comprises approximately 2,418 net acres and is located near the geographic center of The City of San Diego. It is bounded on the west by Interstate 5, on the north by Friars Road west of SR-163 and by the northern slopes of the valley east of SR-163, on the east by the eastern bank of the San Diego River, and on the south by approximately the 150-foot elevation contour line. The Planning Department estimated that 7,253 people resided in 4,834 housing units in Mission Valley as of January 1984. The community plan is based upon a projection of 24,558 people residing in 15,159 housing units as of the horizon year of the plan. (This population projection is based on a household size of 1.62 persons per dwelling unit.) Attainment of these population levels depends upon the economic conditions in this community, relative to regional economic conditions.

PLANNING PROGRAM

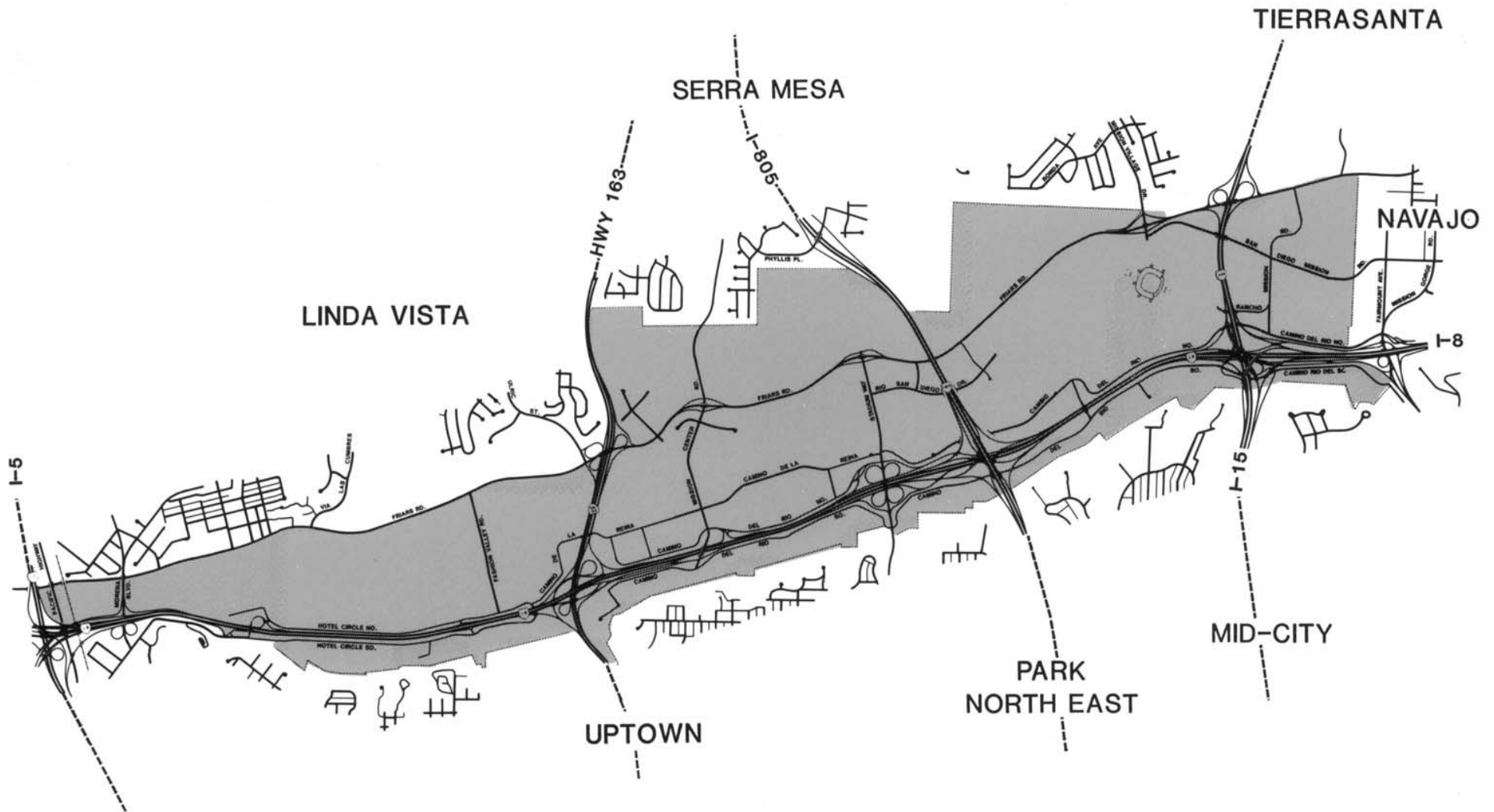
The Mission Valley Community Plan and Environmental Impact Report are the result of a planning program authorized by the San Diego City Council on October 22, 1977, by Resolution No. 219488. The Mission Valley Unified Planning Committee, the officially recognized citizen planning organization, has met regularly with Planning Department staff, and other City staff on an as needed basis, to assist in the preparation of this Plan.

The purpose of the Plan is to provide recommendations to guide development in Mission Valley through the horizon year. The horizon year is defined as attaining the community plan's maximum occupancy capacity which is based upon land use, development intensity, circulation and public facilities. It is anticipated that the horizon year will be reached sometime after the year 2000. A series of goals and objectives established by the community and consistent with citywide policies are included. Once the Plan is adopted by the City Council, any amendments, additions, or deletions will require that the Planning Commission and City Council follow the same public hearing procedures as were required in the initial adoption. While it sets forth proposals for implementation, the Plan does not establish new regulations or legislation, nor does it rezone property. Controls over zoning, subdivisions, transportation, building construction and other development must be enacted separately as part of the implementation program. The adoption of the Mission Valley Community Plan will concurrently amend the **Progress Guide and General Plan** for the City of San Diego but will require rescission of the existing **East Mission Valley Area Plan**. The **Serra Mesa Community Plan** will be amended by deleting those areas of the plan area lying south of the **Linda Vista Community Plan** will be amended by deleting those areas of the plan lying south of the northerly slopes of Mission Valley and incorporating them into the Mission Valley Community Plan. The **Linda Vista Community Plan** will be amended through the incorporation of language pertaining to that area of the community plan lying immediately north of Friars Road and which is dependent upon the Mission Valley circulation system. This area is part of the Mission Valley traffic forecast and the incorporated language will indicate that this area will be subject to the implementing zoning legislation of the Mission Valley Community Plan. Future development based on the new Plan shall be undertaken in complete conformance with all appropriate Council Policies and City Ordinances.

The relationship of this Plan with Planning programs and development patterns in surrounding areas was considered during its preparation. This process included coordination with the adopted **Serra Mesa Community Plan, Navajo Community Plan, Uptown Community Plan, Mission Bay Master Plan, Park North-East Community Plan**, and the revisions to the **Tierrasanta Community Plan, Mid-City Community Plan, and Linda Vista Community Plan**. Proposals by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) and those contained in the adopted **San Diego County General Plan** were also evaluated. Two comprehensive transportation-planning programs were completed during preparation of this Plan. These are an Interstate 8 Transportation System Management (TSM) Study, prepared by SANDAG, and a Transportation Plan for the San Diego Metropolitan Area, prepared by the San Diego Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB).

This Plan should not be considered as a static document. It is intended to provide guidance for the orderly growth of the Mission Valley community. In order to respond to unanticipated changes in environmental, social, or economic conditions, the Plan must be continually monitored and amended when necessary to remain relevant to community and City needs. Once adopted, two additional steps will follow: *implementation* and *review*. The implementation is the process of putting Plan policies and recommendations into effect. Review refers to the process of monitoring the community and recommending changes to the Plan as conditions in the community change. Guidelines for implementation are provided in the Plan, but the actual work must be based on a cooperative effort of private citizens, City officials and other agencies. It is contemplated that the Mission Valley Unified Planning Committee and other private citizen organizations will provide the continuity needed for a sustained, effective implementation program.

Although this Plan is intended to be a development guide for the next fifteen to twenty years, circumstances may arise requiring a plan reviewer update. Community conditions and the legislative framework must be continually monitored to ensure that the Plan remains timely. Considerable technical information was generated in the preparation of the Plan. This material is contained in files at the Planning Department and in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), prepared by the Environmental Quality Division of the Planning Department, which evaluates the environmental effects of each of the eight alternative plan concepts presented. The EIR Conclusions and Recommendations for the Mission Valley Community Plan are included in this Plan document.



CITY OF SAN DIEGO
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

ADJACENT COMMUNITIES MISSION VALLEY COMMUNITY PLAN



FIGURE
2

HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT

Mission Valley is part of the floodplain of the San Diego River, historically a major source of fresh water in the San Diego Metropolitan Area. This water supply has attracted people to the valley since prehistoric times. Archaeological findings include remains of Cosoy, an ancient Kumeyaay Indian village, located near the base of Preside Hill. The Spaniards located the original Mission San Diego de Alcalá near this Indian village site in 1769. As the missionaries and Indian converts developed an agricultural economy, they moved the Mission further inland to its present location in the Valley in 1774. The Valley was named for the presence and influence of this Mission. By 1816, Padre Dam was built and a tile and masonry flume was constructed to convey water directly from the river impoundment to the agricultural lands located near the Mission. Agricultural activities, especially livestock raising, dairying and field cultivation, continued as significant land uses in Mission Valley until the 1960s.

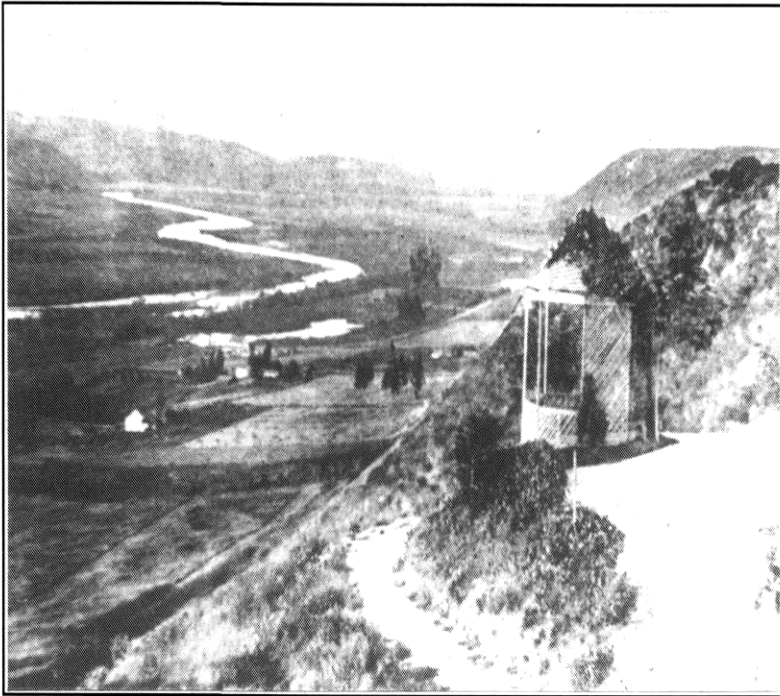
The arrival of the Mormon Battalion in 1847 signaled the beginning of Anglo-American settlement in Mission Valley. Although little new development occurred in the Valley proper during the 19th Century, several nearby settlements were founded in the 1880s. These include Grantville, located just east of the Valley north of Mission Gorge Road, and Silver Terrace (Linda Vista) overlooking west Mission Valley.

Sand and gravel extraction was introduced into the area about 1913, and began in earnest about 1923. Primary sources were the sands along the San Diego River and Murphy Canyon, and the conglomerate rocks in adjacent Serra Mesa. The industry flourished as development spread northward. Although material is no longer being extracted from the San Diego River, extensive activity continues north of Friars Road in Murphy Canyon.

Mission Valley has played a key role in local and regional transportation since prehistoric times. Trails that apparently date back to the Kumeyaay Indians include Canada de la Soledad (Murphy Canyon Road), Mission Trail (Friars Road), Poor Man's Grade (Murray Canyon) and Father Junipero Serra Trail (Mission Gorge Road).

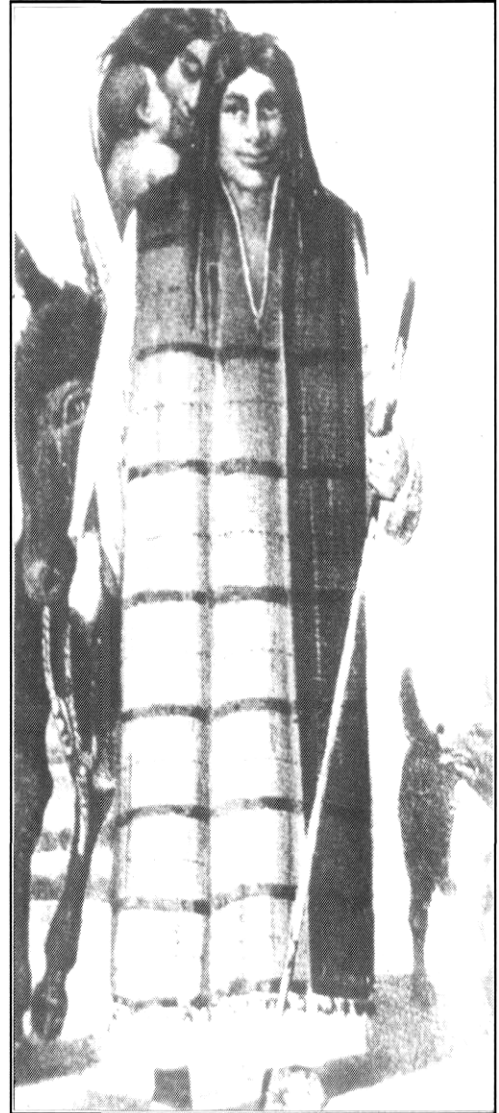
Major urban development has occurred in Mission Valley since 1958, primarily as a result of improvements in the regional highway network. The construction of U.S. 80 (later Interstate 8 Freeway) provided an impetus for commercial development in Mission Valley, and for the rapid displacement of the agricultural economy. This process accelerated when U.S. Highway 395 (now SR-163), and Interstate 805 were completed, the latter in 1971.

The first major urban development was the Mission Valley Shopping Center, approved in 1958. During the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, Hotel Circle became an important commercial-recreation and visitor oriented area. Other significant projects include San Diego Jack Murphy Stadium, completed in 1967 and Fashion Valley Shopping Center, built in 1969. During the early 1970s, the religious order of the Poor Sisters of Nazareth sold much of the land surrounding Mission San Diego de Alcalá. This knoll eventually developed as a multiple dwelling neighborhood, the largest residential area in Mission Valley.



Mission Valley at the turn of the century

Indians of the Kumeyaay tribe were the first known inhabitants of Mission Valley



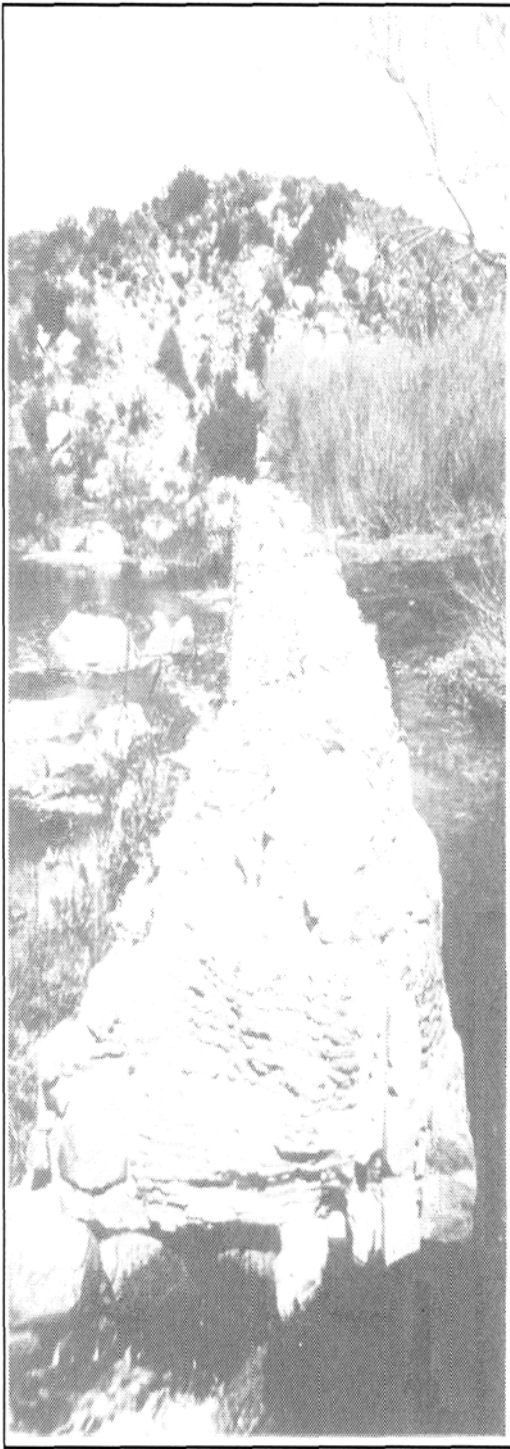


Photo of Mission San Diego de Acala taken in the early 1900s

Remaining structure of the old mission dam built in the 1700s to provide water for irrigation

Mission Valley had become a satellite urban center of San Diego.

Throughout the history of Mission Valley, the San Diego River has been a primary attraction, first as a source of fresh water and later as a scenic recreational asset. The river has had an interesting history in relation to its impact on human use of the floodplain. During the agricultural period (1769 to 1958), drought was as much of a concern as flood. The subsequent period of rapid urbanization from 1958 to 1977 was characterized by very low annual rainfalls. Although the flood potential had been documented in detailed historical accounts from the 1920s and 1940s (a concrete flood channel was approved in 1965 but never constructed), much of the post-1958 development occurred on the floodplain. In 1978, 1979, and 1980, however, three consecutive rainy seasons brought flooding which resulted in property damage. The continuing threat of flooding will have an impact on the future development of Mission Valley.



PLANNING HISTORY

This section summarizes planning programs carried out in Mission Valley by The City of San Diego from 1960 to date. Some of these planning programs did not get adopted by the City Council.

1. MISSION VALLEY PLAN (1960)

The **Mission Valley Plan** (November 1960) was the first planning effort in the Mission Valley community. Background information was supplied by previous studies prepared in 1955 and 1958. This proposed Plan recommended that: 1) industrial expansion be limited to “those extractive industries east of Cabrillo Freeway (SR-163) and north of the river”; 2) commercial expansion be focused on tourist-related recreational uses; 3) office and professional uses remain secondary (up to 25% of the total floor area of a building) due to the problems of limited freeway access, unsuitability of existing and proposed streets for public transit, potential heavy peak-hour traffic and congestion associated with office buildings; and, 4) medium to high density residential development be encouraged as desirable “because of the relatively low rate of traffic generation and living amenities which are offered there,” and the compatibility with the pattern of tourist-oriented development. No official action was taken to adopt the proposed plan.

2. EAST MISSION VALLEY AREA PLAN (1963)

This plan was developed in 1962-63 in the hope that a long-range land use plan could be adopted by the City to guide future development. The study was requested by the Planning Commission in response to a communication from property owners in the area. It included the area east of (then proposed) I-805 to Fairmount Avenue. This plan recommended that: 1) light industrial uses be located in the area between the proposed flood channel and U.S. 80 (I-8); 2) natural resource extraction activities continue north of the river; 3) low density residential (one unit per acre) uses be permitted in limited portions of the south slopes; and, 4) residential-professional land usage, rather than strip commercial, be located along the south side of U.S. 80 because of the low employee density ratio, low peak hour traffic generation, and integration of residential use with administrative and professional office uses. This Plan was adopted by the City Council on April 11, 1963.

3. REVISED EAST MISSION VALLEY AREA PLAN (1968)

A review and revision of the previously adopted plan was necessary due to proposed changes in the alignment and interchange configuration of I-805 and the Escondido Freeway (Ward Road.- Murphy Canyon Road), the reduction in width and the realignment of the San Diego River Flood Channel, possible annexations and the construction of the San Diego Stadium and connecting highways. The planning area was revised to include the area between Friars Road and the top of the bluffs on the north side of the Valley. The recommendations of the revised plan differed from the previous plan in the following ways: 1) light industrial uses were proposed for both sides of Friars Road between I-805 and the Stadium; 2) commercial-recreational uses were proposed for the land surrounding the Stadium and the northern slopes

were designated for low density residential, encouraging the use of planned unit developments, and medium density residential was proposed north and south of the river channel east of Rancho Mission Road; 4) commercial-offices replaced the residential-professional office use south of I-8; and 5) a concrete lined flood channel with an overall width of about 300 feet was first proposed.

4. WEST MISSION VALLEY REPORT (1971)

In November 1968, the City Council designated the West Mission Valley Planning Committee as the citizen representative the group would assist in preparation of the West Mission Valley Community Plan. This report provided resource material to be used by the Committee in developing such a plan. The report assumed that future development would follow (then) existing trends in order to perform a travel forecast. It was concluded that future traffic volumes (359,609 trips excluding through trips) would be greater than could be accommodated in existing or proposed street systems. The report indicated that a future plan would have to consider three possible alternative solutions to this problem: 1) modifying the existing roadway system; 2) reducing the intensity of land use; and, 3) developing and supplementing the existing circulation system with another mode of transportation. The community established the following objectives for the development of the West Mission Valley area plan: 1) provide flexibility in the location of land use; 2) develop qualitative standards for each type of land use; 3) create an urban center in a park-like setting; and, 4) preserve the hillsides and existing open quality of the Valley. This report outlined a planned district concept (with qualitative standards for each type of land use) as an approach to guide the planning and development of Mission Valley.

In October 1977, the City Council determined that a single plan for the entire Mission Valley area would be appropriate and directed planning staff to focus their efforts in that direction. The proposed Mission Valley Community Plan is a response to that direction.

EXISTING SETTING AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

Mission Valley was formed through the erosive action of the San Diego River upon the coastal mesa region. Mission Valley separates two mesas — the northern Linda Vista Terrace and the southern San Diego Terrace. The geology of these mesas consists of tertiary marine sediments made up of conglomerates and tuffaceous sandstones, generally overlain with Quaternary terrace deposits of sands, gravels, and boulders. The Valley floor is composed of alluvial clays, sands, gravel, and boulders. The topography of the Valley is that of a wide, flat floodplain surrounded by steep slopes and mesas to the north and south. The Valley gently slopes from about 600 feet above mean sea level on the eastern end of the community, to sea level at the western end. The San Diego River is the lowest point of the drainage basin.

Mission Valley is identified in the Progress Guide and General Plan for The City of San Diego as an urbanized community. It is primarily a business community with much of its developable land devoted to commercial and office uses. Most development has occurred on the north and south sides of the Valley, along Friars Road and Interstate 8. The central area of the Valley contains the San Diego River which is zoned FW (Floodway) due to the flooding potential, restricting development in areas of inundation. The southern slopes are still primarily in a natural state, while the northern slopes have been excavated for sand and gravel extraction.

Mission Valley is located at nearly the geographic center of The City of San Diego. The Valley is the crossroads for the regional freeway system, enjoying access from Interstates 5,8,15 and 805, and SR-163. It has been a regional center since it first began to urbanize. It is a major employment center, with retail sales, office buildings, and newspaper publishing. It is also a visitor center with a large number of hotels and freeway accessibility to tourist attractions (Mission Bay, Sea World, Balboa Park). A regional entertainment center, it has movie theaters, restaurants, golf courses, and the San Diego Jack Murphy Stadium. With its two regional shopping centers, Mission Valley is also the major regional retail center in the San Diego area at this time.

The Valley has fulfilled a regional role in almost all its development. Only recently has Mission Valley seen itself as a distinct community. The addition of residential development will alter the character of the Valley, giving it a more balanced regional/local character.



Looking West along Camino del Rio taken from behind U.C.S.D. Medical Center, November 1954



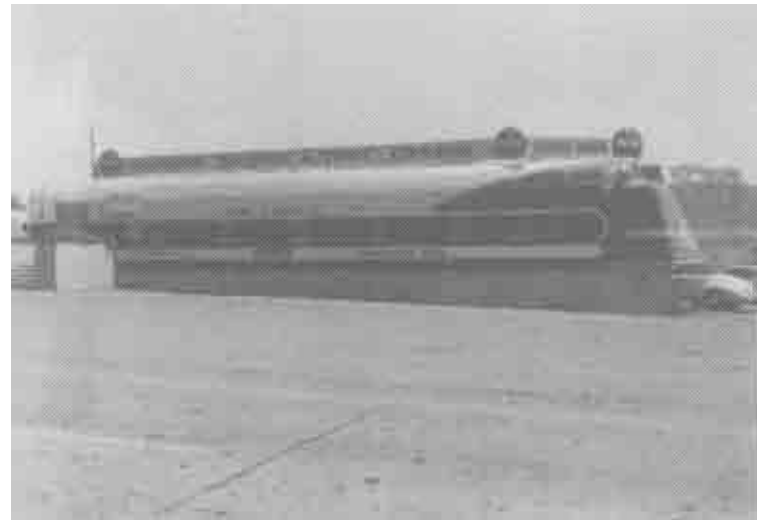
Ferrari Dairy, East of Texas Street, December 1954



American Sand Company, just North of Twain and Powers Streets, December 1954



Mission Valley country Club Golf Tournament, January 1955



Friars Road just West of Highway 163, January 1955